

REMARKS

Applicant has reviewed the Non-Final Office Action mailed September 9, 2005. No claims are being amended, canceled, or added by this Response. Thus, claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, and 34 are pending in the application. Applicant hereby requests further examination and reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks.

In response to the Office Action dated September 9, 2005, Applicant hereby submits that the Examiner cited an inappropriate reference, whose filing date is after the priority date of our application.

The Examiner cites U.S. Patent No. 6,122,603 (the '603 patent) in making a Section 103 rejection of all claims in the current application. The '603 patent has a priority date of May 29, 1998, while the present application has a priority date of December 19, 1997. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In light of the forgoing, reconsideration and allowance of the claims is earnestly solicited. Accordingly, notification to that effect is earnestly requested. In the event that issues arise in the application which may readily be resolved via telephone, the Examiner is kindly invited to telephone the prosecuting attorney, identified below, at (410) 347-8754 to facilitate prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: September 30, 2005

By: 
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